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Rural District Council of Dartford.

Seventh
TWENTY-SIXTH

ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR 1925.

SYLVESTER RICHMOND, M.D.,
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

Rural District Council of Dartford.

Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1925.

April, 1926.

To the Members of the Dartford Rural District Council.

MR. CHAIRMEN AND GENTLEMEN,

I have again the honour to present my Annual Report on the health of the Rural District and on the work carried on by the Health Department.

During the 27 years during which I have been Medical Officer of Health many and very varied changes have taken place in the District and its circumstances, and from being one of the most insanitary Rural Districts it has become one of the healthiest and up to date in the Country.

A few years back the Medical Officer of the Ministry of Health issued a circular, on which all Medical Officers of Health should found their Annual Reports under special headings, so as to render it possible to make a ready comparison between different districts.

Every 5 years we are asked to make a general survey report on the natural and social conditions of our District and the general progress made during the Quinquennial period.

This is the fifth year of this period and I will commence my Report by some general remarks dealing with the changes and progress made in matters that more or less influence the health and social conditions of our people.

1. The population and area of the Rural District have been considerably reduced, Crayford and Swanseombe having obtained Urban powers, Crayford at the end of 1920 and now Swanscombe quite recently.

The secession of Crayford was a loss to the Rural District, not only in population and rateable value, but also to Crayford itself, as the Rates were immediately very considerably increased and without any perceptible benefit to anyone.

Swanscombe has also now become an Urban District and there is every reason to think the Rates will be similarly raised.

This secession has been brought about by a few individuals, the bulk of the population knowing nothing about it. The County Council held an enquiry, which was attended mainly by Officials, the general public being hardly aware of the meeting, and they granted these Urban Powers on the strength of a Report obtained in this way and thereby in a measure breaking up the Rural District.

Such changes as these materially affect a large District like ours, more especially in matters of finance. Naturally there must be compensation of some sort, and so far Crayford has not been able to settle these pecuniary liabilities. It cannot further increase its Rates, and has been compelled to arrange to defer payment and I fear something similar will happen in the case of Swanscombe.

This is a serious matter for the Rural District. If Crayford could not meet its obligations, how can Swanscombe do so, especially with its probable diminution in Rateable Value in the near future, for Swanscombe is no longer the centre of the Cement industry, as in former years, for a large Factory, now owned by the Associated Portland Cement Companies, has been erected in Stone and another is being built in Northfleet with all possible labour saving devices, which will materially affect Swanscombe in the near future.

2. Other more beneficial changes have been brought about in the last 5 years viz:—

- (i) The reconstruction of our main arterial roads opening up new avenues for intercourse and trade throughout the District.
- (ii) The erection of many new houses to relieve overcrowding.
- (iii) The sewerage of Stone and Swanscombe, where the overflowing cesspools were a constant menace to the general health and comfort of the people.

Roads.

- (a) Old Watling Street. This ancient Roman road from Dover to the North has been relaid and widened throughout its length, and in our District it has been reconstructed from being a narrow tortuous lane, lost in Swanscombe Wood, and made into a main thoroughfare joining up Rochester with Crayford, by a deep cutting through Swanscombe Wood, and avoiding the Town of Dartford, crossing Dartford Heath with a roadway of 30 feet wide and 15 feet on either side for a pathway or further widening if necessary.

Watling Street is now a main thoroughfare, joining the Dover road at Rochester and connected with all the main arterial roads in the neighbourhood and takes most of the through heavy traffic each way, all steep gradients have been done away with and has a uniform, almost level surface throughout, and numerous bye-pass roads, widened with a similar surface, give access to it throughout its length.

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- (b) The main road from Dartford to Rochester, via Greenhithe, has been treated in the same manner and the Folkestone road, via Farningham and Maidstone, has also been widened with a new bypass road crossing the river Darent by a new bridge and cutting off the village of Farningham with its numerous hills and narrow roadway.
 - (c) Another bypass has been constructed over the Crayford Marshes connecting Dartford and Erith, thus avoiding the steep Crayford Hill.
 - (d) A further road, connecting Dartford with Maidstone, via Green Street Green, Longfield, and Meopham, is in process of being widened and relaid.

These new roads have materially relieved the congested state of our main roads and enabled the now almost universal omnibus routes, not only to cater for, but also to create an evergrowing intercourse between the various towns and villages with almost continuous services linked up throughout the county.

All these changes are an undoubted benefit to the health and convenience of the people and provide a cheap and ready means of intercourse, unknown to our parents, and, in addition they had become an absolute necessity from the rapid and increasing growth in the numbers of heavy motor vehicles, which pass along in an almost continuous line.

On these new main roads all the Public Houses in our District have been provided with accommodation for males and females, which is so especially necessary for char-a-banc traffic.

Houses.

During the past five years many houses have been erected, especially in Swanscombe, and the following table gives the figures for each year and each parish, where houses have been built, giving a total of over 500, a quarter of which are in Swanscombe, where the state of over-crowding was the most serious.

Houses erected by	Private Enterprise.	By Rural Council.
1920	27	
1921	39	56
1922	24	74
1923	33	30
1924	26	98
1925	24	110
Total	174	368

Swanscombe, 146; Stone, 62; Sutton-at-Hone, 60; Farningham, 44; Southfleet, 16. Ash, 12; Eynsford, 10; Longfield, 10; Darent, 8.

In addition to the Council Houses already erected 126 are in course of construction, and many more will be built this year in the various parishes, and even this will leave many applicants without a house. The tenants are not supposed to sublet, but the rents being so high, subletting is very common, which leads to much overcrowding.

These new houses have already given material relief to the crowding of the past years, although there are many families still living in one or two rooms without the necessary conveniences of ordinary life.

In our District almost all the building has been carried on by direct labour, with a subsidy from the Ministry of Health, which has proved both cheap and effective, for which the Council deserves the best thanks from all concerned. The quality and small cost of these buildings is fully recognised by the Ministry of Health.

Of the houses, built by private enterprise, a very large number, mostly of the Bungalow type, are in Hartley on the Ash road, so many indeed, about 170, that before long the question of connecting this road, via Longfield with the sewer at Green Street Green, will have to be considered. At present all of these new houses have cesspools, which are emptied by a contractor through the Committee dealing with the outlying parishes.

Sanitary Matters. Sewers.

During these 5 years numerous sewers have been constructed, the most important of which is the sewerage of Stone and Swanscombe, which has now been completed and nearly all the houses have been connected.

This has proved a very costly undertaking, but the Ministry of Health made very considerable contributions, on the condition that the services of the unemployed should be utilised in carrying out the work. The total cost of the sewers has proved much higher than the original estimate, owing to several unexpected difficulties, the chief of which was the flooding of the deeper trenches by the underground flow of water in the low-lying portions of Stone and in several places, where owing to the nature of the ground, deep tunneling was found to be necessary.

These difficulties were largely responsible for the long delay in completion and the large increase of cost beyond the original estimate, but another matter seriously hampered the carrying out of the work, viz.—the unjustifiable claim put forward by the West Kent Sewer Board for the outlet, instead of being discharged directly into the river, to be carried a long distance along the water logged marshes into the Dartford District, to be discharged by pumping into their open tank and for which a heavy annual charge was demanded. This was of course refused, but much time was wasted, hence the Committee for carrying out the sewer were not responsible for the great delay and increased cost of the work.

Some 30 years ago, prior to the war, a large number of houses were built in Swanscombe and Stone, especially in Swanscombe. The cesspools of these houses have now become silted up with gruse, so that soakage no longer takes place, hence the sewerage of these two parishes had become imperative and could no longer be delayed, owing to the intolerable nuisance from cesspools over flowing in every direction before they could be emptied and the ever growing expense.

Thanks to the subsidy from the Ministry of Health for employing the unemployed and the fact that the annual cost of cesspool emptying had grown to such a large amount, which will now cease, the interest on the borrowed money will hardly exceed the amount we have had to pay in recent years and it will automatically become less year by year.

In other parishes new sewers have also been constructed, viz.—in Stone, the Darenth Asylum and Southern Hospital together with the hamlet of Lanes End, with Green Street Green, have been connected with the main sewer. The whole of Horton Kirby and part of Eynsford are now also connected, abolishing 60 odd cesspools in Horton Kirby and 50 in Darenth, and the Wilmington sewer has also been extended three-quarters of a mile to connect the numerous houses now being erected on the Baldwin Estate in that parish and in several other parishes small connections have been made, such as the new Council Houses in Watling Street, Stone, etc.

The whole Rural District is now sewered, except the outlying Rural Parishes, which are too far from the Thames, but I should mention that there is still another small matter, which requires immediate attention. At the hamlet of Bean, Stone, an ever recurring nuisance from the over flow of the cesspools occurs, where the sewage almost every month, runs across the Bean—Green Street Green road. It is a considerable expense emptying these cesspools as the vans take nearly a week each month for this district alone. This nuisance could be easily remedied by a small septic installation for which the fall of the ground is well adapted, or as some think by continuing the main sewer from Cobham Terrace, Greenhithe, up to Bean, a distance of about 2 miles, but this is a matter for expert advice.

1. GENERAL STATISTICS.

Area (Acres)	...	...	...	...	...	...	35,542
Population (Registrar-General's estimated figures) 1925	...	...	...	...	...	...	40,222
Population (Census, 1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	37,216
Number of Inhabited Houses (Census, 1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	about 7,000
„ „ Families or Separate Occupiers (1921)	...	...	...	...	...	...	about 7,500
„ „ Houses built by Rural Council	...	...	...	...	...	...	368
„ „ „ „ „ „ during 1925	...	...	...	...	...	...	110
„ „ „ „ „ „ in process of building 1926	...	...	...	...	...	...	126
„ „ „ „ „ „ Private Enterprise	...	...	...	...	...	...	174
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£204,875
Assessable Value	...	...	...	...	...	...	£184,016
Sums represented by a Penny Rate	...	...	...	...	...	...	£767
The Swanscombe Rateable value is £55,299. Assessable value £54,322							
Id. rate produces £226.							

The chief occupations of the inhabitants is Cement Manufacture, Paper Factories, Agriculture and Fruit and Flower growing.

Cement Manufacture appears to have no injurious influence on health.

2. VITAL STATISTICS.

				Totals.	Males.	Females.
Births 602 {	Legitimate	...	...	582	272	310
	Illegitimate	...	...	20	7	13
	Totals	...	...	602	279	323
Birth Rate	...	...	14·7	1924, 15·8	1923, 17·56	1922, 17·7
For England and Wales	...	...	18·3	„ 18·8	„ 17·36	
Still Births				...	12	

Deaths 373 Males. 202 Females. 171
 Death Rate... 9.2 1924, 8.17 1923, 7.37 1922, 9.2
 For England and Wales 12.2 „ 12.2 „ 11.6
 Uncertified deaths 8 = 2.0 per cent. of all deaths.
 Deaths certified by Medical Practitioners = 91 per cent.
 Number of Women dying in consequence of Child-birth ...
 From Sepsis .. 0 Other causes... 1
 33 Inquests were held (22 within the district, 11 outside).
 from Natural Causes 3. Misadventure 28 Suicide 2.

Infant Mortality.

The number of deaths of Infants under 1 year was 37 = 19 males, 18 females, of these 2 were illegitimate ; 2 males, 0 females.

The Infantile Death Rate was 61.6 as compared with 66.2 for the year 1924, 52.48 for 1923, and 55.4 for 1922.

For England and Wales the Death Rate was 75, the same as in 1924.

Table shewing the Ages and Causes of Infantile Deaths under 1 year.

CAUSES OF DEATH. (Infants)	Under 1 Week	1-2 Wks	2-3 Wks.	3-4 Wks.	Total under 1 Month.	1-3 Mths.	3-6 Mths	6-9 Mths.	9-12 Mths.	Total deaths under 1 year.
Notified Cases	3	...	4	2	9	15	4	4	3	35
Transferable Cases	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	2
Influenza ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Whooping Cough ... ..	...	...	1	...	1	2	1	1	...	5
Pneumonia ... ..	...	...	...	1	1	1	...	1	1	4
Bronchitis ... ..	...	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	1	4
Encephalitis ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	2
Meningitis ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	1
Convulsions ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1
Premature Birth	2	...	...	...	2	3	1	...	...	6
Atrophy Marasmus	3	...	1	...	4	...	1	...	1	6
Congenital Malformations ... ..	...	...	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	2
Enteritis ... ..	...	...	...	...	...	3	1	...	1	4
Syphilis ... ..	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	1
Totals	5	...	4	2	11	15	4	4	3	37

The various Causes of Death during 1925 (Register General).

Outside District.			Males	Fe- males	Outside District.			Males 104	Fe- males 100
1	Enteric Fever	...	...	1	16	Arterio-Sclerosis	...	6	1
2	Measles	...	...	2	17	Bronchitis	...	10	17
3	Scarlet Fever	...	...	1	18	Pneumonia	...	16	10
4	Whooping Cough	...	3	7	19	Other Respiratory Diseases	...	1	4
5	Diphtheria	...	3	4	20	Ulcer of stomach	...	2	2
6	Encephalitis Lethargica	...	...	1	21	Diarrhoea (under 2 years.)	...	3	3
7	Influenza	...	3	3	22	Appendicitis	...	2	...
8	Meningitis	...	...	1	23	Cirrhosis	...	...	1
9	Phthisis	...	14	8	24	Nephritis	...	5	1
10	Other Tubercular Diseases....	...	5	3	25	Puerperal Sepsis	...	...	...
11	Cancer	...	18	23	26	Parturition	...	...	1
12	Diabetes	...	...	2	27	Premature Birth and Marasmus, etc.	...	10	5
13	Rheumatism	...	...	...	28	Suicide	...	1	1
14	Cerebral Hoemorrhage	...	11	15	29	Violence	...	18	4
15	Heart Disease	...	45	31	30	Other Diseases	...	24	21
			104	100	373 Deaths.			202	171

Health Services.

We have the following Hospitals :

1. No Tuberculosis Hospital.
 2. King Edward Avenue Hospital (Guardians).
 3. Isolation Hospital for Infectious Cases (also Guardians).
 4. Small Pox, Metropolitan Asylums Board.
 5. Livingstone Hospital, Voluntary Subscriptions.
- and several Special Hospitals.

(1) All Tuberculosis Sanatoria are under the County Medical Officer, scattered generally throughout the County.

- (2) King Edward Avenue Hospital, 37 West Hill, Dartford (the old Workhouse Infirmary), supported by the Guardians, provides two open air shelters for Tuberculosis cases, 13 beds in each block, for male and female patients respectively.

It is an up to-date model Hospital with a well equipped Operating Theatre and a complete staff of nurses, viz.—a Superintending Head Nurse, 8 Nursing Sisters, 6 Staff Nurses and 21 Probationers. It has 186 beds.

The accommodation of the various Wards is as follows :

2 Large Female Wards, 36 beds in each	...	...	...	...	72
2 Large Male Wards, 32 beds in each	...	...	...	...	64
2 Small Female Wards, 4 beds in each	...	...	...	...	8
Maternity Ward, 4 beds	...	...	...	...	4
Childrens Ward, 10 beds	...	...	...	...	10
2 Open Air Wards, 14 beds in each	...	...	...	...	28
					<hr/> 186

There is a sick nursery with 10 beds, also a nursery for married and unmarried mothers and for Orphans and Deserted Children under 3 years of age, giving accommodation for 12 women and 26 children.

- (3) The Sanitary Authority have an Isolation Hospital, in common with the Urban Council, at Bow Arrow Lane, to which all infectious cases are removed. There are 88 beds available for Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever cases. During 1925 144 cases were admitted from the Rural District, 64 cases of Scarlet Fever and 80 of Diphtheria.
- (4) The Metropolitan Asylums Board receive any Small Pox cases.
- (5) The Livingstone Hospital also has a Ward for infants and young children (paying cases).
- (6) The Alexandra Hospital, Swanley Junction, for chipped children. Arrangements are in progress to utilise this Hospital, in connection with the suggested provision of General Hospital treatment for crippled children throughout the County.
- (7) Parkwood Home for cases from the London Hospitals.
- (8) Two Homes for little Boys—one at Hextable and one at Horton Kirby, Farningham.

Ambulance.—In all cases of Infectious Disease the bedding, cloths, etc., are removed by the Ambulance Wagon, which is located, at the Isolation Hospital, where there is a complete Disinfection Installation. Immediately on receiving a notification case the Inspector visits and disinfects the House, the Ambulance Wagon taking the bedding, etc., when the patient is removed.

There is also an Ambulance for non Infectious cases and accidents kept at King Edward's Hospital, 37. West Hill.

Clinics and Treatment Centres.

I have 10 Maternity and Child Welfare Centres (see end of Report).

I have no Day Nurseries or School Clinics.

The Tuberculosis Dispensary is open twice a week at 71, Overy Street, Dartford, for the Rural District, on Mondays 1.30—3.30 p.m. and on Tuesdays 5—6 p.m. These Clinics are largely attended and are very popular. The numbers availing themselves of the Clinic during the year were 423, and the number of new cases attending for examination were 52.

New Cases.	Adults.		Children.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Pulmonary	15	6	1	2 = 24 Pulmonary.
Non-Pulmonary ...	1	1	4	— = 6 Non Pulmonary
Negative	4	3	7	8 = 22 Negative
	20	10	12	10 = 52

Total number of individual cases attending the Dispensary during the year:

	Adults.		Children.	
	M.	F.	M.	F.
Pulmonary	27	14	6	8 = 55
Non-Pulmonary ...	4	4	9	3 = 20
				} = 75

Revolving shelters for open air treatment can be obtained free by application to the County Medical Officer.

Massage and Electrical Clinic.—A Massage Clinic is open daily at 37, West Hill, under the County Council, from 9 a.m. to 8.30 p.m., in charge of a trained sister and Masseurs. A Specialist attends every Friday for ex-service men.

The attendances for the year were 5807; of these 1662 were ex-service men. 1249 in-patients from the Infirmary, 1136 out-patients and 1760 private patients. For private patients the charges are from 7/6 downwards for each attendance.

Venereal Clinics.—Consultations are held (under the County Council at 37, West Hill) for men as well as for women. For men on Mondays, 4.30 p.m. to 6.30 p.m., on Wednesday, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. For women, Tuesdays 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. They are held in separate blocks for men and women and are free to all comers.

The attendances for 1925 were 2832 (males 2094, females 738). The individual number of patients treated were 410 (males 311, females 99). New patients during the year were 70 (males 45, females 25). The Clinic was open 257 times and is open daily (Saturdays excepted).

Public Health Officer, etc.—I have 3 whole time Inspectors subsidised by the Ministry of Health who act as Food and Meat Inspectors as well as Inspectors of New Buildings and other Sanitary Matters.

I have also a Lady Clerk who assists in all office work and attends all the Welfare Meetings and has charge of all the Baby Food, etc.

We have no special nurses, either for General or Infectious cases, but each parish has its own Nursing Association with a District Nurse supported by private subscriptions and assisted by a small donation from the Council, but no special arrangements for nursing are provided, except such Clinics, as those for Massage and Electric treatment and for Venereal Diseases.

Health Visitors, see Report at the end.

Midwives.—There are ten Midwives practising in the District, eight of these fully trained and two without any special training.

Adoptive Acts.

- (a) The Public Health Acts Amendment Act, 1890, Part ii, Sect. 29, 30 and 31, and Part iii.
- (b) The Public Health Acts Amendment Acts, 1907, Part ii, Sect. 8-33. Part iii, Sect. 14-50. Part iv and Part v were adopted in 1915.
- (c) The Infectious Diseases Prevention Act, 1890.
- (d) The Notification of Births Act, 1907.

Bye Laws.

Revised Bye Laws for New Streets and Buildings, 1919.
Fruit Pickers' Huts and for Vans, Tents and Sheds, 1915.
Common Lodging Houses and Houses let in Lodgings, 1913.
Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops, 1885.
Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts, 1886.

Sanitary Circumstances.

Water.—The Metropolitan Water Board supplies the greater part of the District, but the Mid Kent Co. have their mains in the 5 outlying parishes of Southfleet, Longfield, Hartley, Ridley, Ash and Kingsdown. The supply is constant from each Company. We have very few wells. The water is very good and pure.

Rivers and Streams.

The River Darent is our only River. It is free from pollution throughout its course.

Drainage and Sewerage.

Every parish is now sewered, except the outlying ones, a long distance from the river. The West Kent sewer, which commences at Sevenoaks, runs along side the River Darent throughout our District and takes in all our sewers, except those for Stone and Swanscombe.

Closet Accommodation.—All our Closets have the water laid on, all are panned with drains to the sewer or cesspool. There are few open privies and only a few earth closets.

Scavenging.—The removal of house refuse is carried on weekly and almost all the houses are provided with moveable covered ashbins.

Fruit Pickers' Huts.—Since the war the number of Huts have been very largely reduced and comparatively few pickers are employed from outside the District, consequently the Huts are little used. They are closed from Nov. 1st to March 1st, except where personal application is made. Women and children are not allowed in the winter months.

Sanitary Inspections.

The following is a summary of the Inspections made during the year with the result of the consequent notices issued.

6371 visits were paid by the 3 Inspectors.

	No.	Visits Paid.	Defects found.	Defects Abated.
Bakehouses	28	76	11	10
Daries (22) Cowsheds (37) Milkshops (8)	67	113	10	9
Slaughter { Registered 4 Houses. { Licensed 10 } ...	14	369	9	9
Other food preparing places ...	11	33	2	2
Common Lodging Houses ...	...	...	...	...
Houses let in Lodgings ...	...	...	...	...
Factories, Workshops and Work places	196	110	11	11

Nuisances found and reported during the year.

Overcrowding	number investigated	17	number abated	12
Offensive Trades	" "	—		
Keeping of Animals	" "	22	" "	21
Sanitary Accommodation	" "	1086	" "	1086
		(including conversion of type 8).		
Drainage	" "	104	" "	98
Dustbins	" "	124	" "	106
Smoke abatement	" "	3	" "	2
Other Matters	" "	264	" "	260

Amount of food condemned, 1 ton, 15 cwt., 9 quarters, 23 lbs.

Number of notices served, statutory, 20; informal, 435.

Number of houses disinfected, 145.

Number of batches of clothing, 139.

One ejectment order was obtained and the house was closed.

Schools.

All the Elementary Schools are visited regularly. The sanitary conditions are good and water from the main is laid on. In case of an epidemic of infectious disease the school is always disinfected and any relations of the infected child are excluded.

Housing

There is still a general shortage in the number of houses and there are many families living in one room, but many more houses are about to be built in all parts of the district. We have already this year 126 additional houses in course of erection and many more will be built in various parishes before the end of the year. Our population will be reduced by about one quarter by Swanscombe becoming an Urban District and there is strong reason for thinking that the new Urban Council will be unable to build as many houses as in past years to abate the still large amount of overcrowding in their parish. It is almost impossible to deal effectually with unfit houses, as long as the present condition of overcrowding exists.

A number of old houses have been closed in the last year or two, but this has only aggravated the housing conditions without any material benefit.

We have no specially unhealthy areas in the district.

HOUSING STATISTICS.

Number of new houses erected during the year:

(a) Total (including numbers under (b))	...	542
(b) With State assistance under Housing Acts:		
(i) By local Authority	... ..	368
(ii) By other bodies or persons	... ..	174

1. Unfit dwelling-houses.

Inspection. —(1). Number of dwelling-houses inspected for Housing defects (under Public Health and Housing Acts)	... ..	477
(2) Number of houses inspected and recorded under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910, or the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	... ..	220
(3) Number of houses found to be in a state dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	... ..	272

2. Remedy of defects without service of formal notice.

Number of defective houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	228
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3. Action under Statutory Powers.

A. Proceedings under Section 3 of the Housing Act, 1925.

(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of notices were served requiring repairs	... ..	154
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:		
(a) By owners	... ..	141
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	... ..	0

- (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders became operative in pursuance of declaration by Owners of intention to close 7

B. Proceedings under Public Health Acts.

- (1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 200
- (2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :
- (a) By owners 195
- (b) By Local Authority in default of owner 0

C. Proceedings under Sections 11, 14 and 15 of the Housing Act, 1925.

- (1) Number of representations made with the view of the making of Closing Orders 11
- (2) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were made 11
- (3) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Closing Orders were determined the dwelling-houses having been rendered fit ... 0
- (4) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 4
- (5) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders 4

Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) The Milk supply has been satisfactory throughout the district. It is mostly imported and the arrangements for its distribution are also satisfactory. The Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops are visited regularly and the Dairies, etc., are whitewashed twice a year.

No complaints of Tuberculosis milk have been received.

Samples are taken from time to time by the Inspectors.

Numbers of licences for the sale of milk have been issued and no refusals of registration have been made.

(b) **Meat Inspection.**—We have no public Slaughter House in the district. All Butchers' Shops and Slaughter Houses are registered. The number of Slaughter Houses in the area were in 1920, 9; in January, 1925, 13; in December, 1925, 10. Under the New Meat Regulations 3 were temporarily closed until reconstructed, others cleansed and new drainage supplied and all meat exposed for sale must be protected by glazed shutters and fine wire and means of ventilation supplied.

Under the new Meat Regulations the Inspectors attend all slaughterings and examine the carcasses before passing it on for sale.

Pig killing is mostly done by villagers. The Council require all to be notified to the Inspectors before killing, and only six pigs to be killed in one year by any one person on unregistered premises.

Many samples of diseased meat were condemned and voluntarily destroyed by butchers.

(c) **Other Foods.**—All Bakehouses are regularly whitewashed.

(d) No cases of food poisoning have been reported.

Prevalence and Control over Infectious Diseases.

The following table gives the number of cases on each Notifiable Disease registered during 1925.

Diseases.	No. of Cases Notified.	No. sent to Hospital.	No. of Deaths.	Ages at Death.
Small Pox ...	...	...	...	.
Diphtheria ...	80	80	7	Ages { Male 9, 11. Female 2, 3, 4, 6, 13.
Scarlet Fever ...	61	60	2	Ages { Male 0, 0. Female 9, 22.
Enteric Fever ...	...	...	...
Paratyphoid ...	1	1	1	Age { Male 0. Female 14.
Puerperal Fever...	...	...	...
Pneumonia ...	4	...	...
Erysipelas ...	9	...	...
Cerebro-Spinal ...	1	...	1	Age { Male 0. Female 4.
Ercephalitis - Lathergica ...	1	1	1	Age { Male 0. Female 22.
Ophthalmia Reohctororm...	...	...	...

Towards the end of last year *Scarlet Fever* as well as *Measles* assumed a severe epidemic form in Swanscombe and spreading throughout the neighbouring parishes, continued through the early months of this year. Removal to Hospital is the only remedy we have for checking Scarlet Fever, which is spread so widely by contact in the schools. All our cases go to Hospital, as a matter of course.

The number of return cases of Scarlet Fever are very few.

Diphtheria.

During the past 5 years the Notifications of Diphtheria have considerably decreased, as shown below :

					Diphtheria.						Scarlet Fever.
1920	...	...	...	...	133 cases	...	...	...	...	...	135 cases
1921	...	...	...	...	150	„	...	...	...	...	168 „
1922	...	...	...	...	55	„	...	...	...	...	105 „
1923	...	...	...	...	31	„	...	...	...	...	35 „
1924	...	...	...	...	25	„	...	...	...	...	71 „
1925	...	...	...	...	80	„	...	...	...	...	61 „

The number of Notifications of Diphtheria for last year, 80 would seem to disprove this statement. Up to August we had very few cases, but from this date the numbers were run up by a sudden outbreak in the girls school at Swanscombe, which was summarily stopped by swabbing the whole class room. Three carriers were found and excluded and there were no more cases. The whole affair only lasted three weeks, but as many as 27 cases were notified and there were six deaths. This outbreak was traceable to two infants and one School case, two months before. There evidently must have been a carrier in the School.

A month or two later a somewhat similar outbreak occurred in Stone school, and swabbing the whole class room produced one carrier, who was responsible for some 14 cases. He was isolated and no further cases were reported.

These instances point to the fact that early swabbing of whole class rooms for single cases would probably prevent many serious outbreaks of Diphtheria, save many lives and large sums in Hospital fees.

As all our children now go to school and our Diphtheria cases are so many of them school children, it follows that its spread largely depends upon carriers.

To eliminate these carriers I would suggest that whenever a case attending school is notified, the whole class room should be at once swabbed, this would get rid of the carrier and no further cases might be expected and these repeated epidemics would rarely occur.

This would save the various Councils the cost of numerous Hospital fees, (as each costs £4) and enable them to pay for each swabbing (*which should be done by an expert*) and effect a large saving by preventing the occurrence of further cases and the Bacteriological Departments would also be recouped for any extra expense. This should be made an established rule, which it is certainly not at present, although undoubtedly many households and in schools also, a few possibly suspicious cases in a class are frequently swabbed, but this does not eliminate the carrier or carriers, and the outbreak becomes an epidemic with many deaths and a large outlay in Hospital fees, often hundreds of pounds. All our cases are immediately removed to Hospital, where Antitoxin is at once administered.

The Homes, bedding, etc., of all infectious cases are at once disinfected after removal to Hospital. All cases are notified to the Head Teacher of the schools, and also the date of return from Hospital.

Antitoxin is supplied by the County Medical Officer on application.

The Bacteriological Laboratory at Maidstone examines and reports upon all swabs, etc., sent free of charge. During 1925 350 swabs were examined from Medical Practitioners in the Rural District, of these 18 for Tuberculosis were returned as positive, and 33 negative. For Diphtheria 24 were positive and 252 negative. For Typhoid Fever 2 were sent—both negative. We have had no case Typhoid in the District for several years. From the Tuberculosis Clinics 23 specimens were sent, of which 6 were positive and 17 negative.

The Schicks Test for Diphtheria has been tried at the Alexandra Hospital, Swanley Junction. Two cases occurred after it was used, which leaves the result as negative.

Influenza caused 6 deaths. Its incidence was about the same as in other districts. Six deaths gives a per centage of 0.10 per 1000.

Cancer caused 44 deaths, 20 males and 24 females, equal to 1.0 per 1000. The cases were more numerous than for many years past.

The ages at death were :

27, 39, 41, 46, 57, 54, 58, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 66, 66, 70, 72, 75, 79, 80,	= 20	} = 44 Cases
37, 38, 40, 40, 52, 52, 55, 56, 61, 62, 62, 62, 63, 64, 66, 66, 70, 74, 75, 75, 76, 77, 80, 80, = 24	= 24	

Tuberculosis.

Table showing the ages and age at Death of all new notified cases of Tuberculosis during 1925.

Age Periods	New Cases 1925				Deaths.				Asylums.																																																										
	New Cases 1925				Deaths.				New Cases 1925.				Deaths 1925																																																						
	Pulmonary		Non pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non Pulmonary																																																				
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F																																																			
0—1																																																			
1—5	1																																																			
5—10	...	1	4	1	2																																																			
10—15	1	2	1	1	1																																																			
15—20	4	1	1	1	1	1																																																			
20—25	2	1	1	2	...	1	...	1	...																																																			
25—35	5	4	3	2	1	1																																																			
35—45	...	2	1	1	1	2	1	1																																																			
45—55	3	1	1																																																			
55—65	1																																																			
65upwards																																																			
Totals	15	12	8	2	6	3	0	2	6	2	0	2	1	3	0	1																																																			
<table> <tr> <td colspan="4">27 10</td><td colspan="4">9 2</td><td colspan="4">8 2</td><td colspan="4">4 1</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">36</td><td colspan="4">11</td><td colspan="4">10</td><td colspan="4">5</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">New Cases</td><td colspan="4">Deaths</td><td colspan="4">New Cases Asylum</td><td colspan="4">Deaths</td><td></td></tr> </table>																	27 10				9 2				8 2				4 1					36				11				10				5					New Cases				Deaths				New Cases Asylum				Deaths				
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Deaths Registered from Tuberculosis.

22 Deaths from Pulmonary Consumption and 6 from Non-Pulmonary Tuberculosis were registered during the year 1925.

Under Years ...		0	1	5	10	15	20	25	35	45	55	Totals.
		1	5	10	15	20	25	35	45	55	65	
Pulmonary ...	Males ...	—	—	1	—	—	2	6	5	1	1	= 16 = 6 } = 22 deaths.
	Females	—	—	—	1	1	2	1	1	—	—	
Other Forms of Tuberculosis	Males ...	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	—	—	—	= 3 = 3 } = 6 deaths.
	Females	—	2	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	

Of these 22 deaths all were notified except 2. Of the Non-Pulmonary deaths 3 infants under 2 years were not notified.

In addition to the above 4 Pulmonary and 1 Non-Pulmonary deaths were notified from the Asylums.

Maternity and Infant Welfare.

I am now conducting 10 Infant Welfare Centres, viz.—at Swanscombe, Greenhithe, Stone, Wilmington, Swanley Junction, Horton Kirby, Farningham and Eynsford, Longfield, Ash and Southfleet. The meetings are held fortnightly, five each week, at which over 6,000 babies and other older children under 5 years attended during the year.

A special Lecturer has been engaged to give a Lecture, on general Hygiene and the management of Infants and the Home, at each Clinic, once every six weeks throughout the year.

Each Clinic has a Ladies Committee. They keep the Registers and assist generally, as well as the local Midwives in weighing the babies and attending to the teas, sale of wool and various infant garments. My Lady Clerk attends at each meeting and sells the dried Milk, Vitmar, Virol, etc. The Health Visitors attend to the general management of the Clinic and assist me. I attend every meeting and see each mother and child. We have 3 dentists for the various districts. All applications for Dentistry and Milk for mothers, infants and young children are brought before a Committee of Ladies from each district, which meets monthly and goes through the list of applications, etc.

During the year over 1,300 packets of dried milk were granted at these meetings, and a large quantity of cows milk, Virol, etc.

These Clinics are most popular and are largely attended, at some of the larger Clinics, as many as 50 or 60 frequently attend, the average attendance is about 36 (mothers with babies 24, older children 12). I have 5 Health Visitors, 3 whole time fully qualified nurses, and 2 half time, also qualified nurses, for the outlying parishes. They visit every new-born baby after the ninth day and periodically make revisits to all and for ailing children make frequent visits as may be necessary. One of them has a motor cycle as she has long distances to cover.

During the past year 6,010 visits were paid by the Health Visitors. Primary visits, 625; Revisits, 5,122; Antenatal, 172; Tuberculosis, 91.

We have no special anti-natal Clinics, but the Health Visitors are frequently consulted by expectant mothers on their rounds and report any cases of difficulty to me.

The Hospital at 37, West Hill, Dartford, has special Wards for Infants, as well as for unmarried mothers and illegitimate children.

(Signed) **S. RICHMOND,**
Medical Officer of Health.

7th May, 1926.

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS and WORKPLACES.

1. Inspection of Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

Including Inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors or Inspectors of Nuisances.

PREMISES.	NUMBER OF		
	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Prosecutions.
Factories (including factory laundries)	35	7	—
Workshops (including workshop laundries)	79	3	—
Workplaces (other than outworkers' premises)	82	4	—
Total	196	14	—

2. Defects found in Factories, Workshops and Workplaces.

PARTICULARS.	NUMBER OF DEFECTS.			Number of Prose- cutions.
	Found.	Remedied	Referred to H.M. Inspector	
Nuisances under the Public Health Acts :—				
Want of cleanliness	8	8		
Want of ventilation	3	3		
Overcrowding	—	—		
Want of drainage of floors	3	3		
Other nuisances	7	7		
Sanitary accommodation {	Insufficient	4	4	
	Unsuitable or defective	3	2	
	Not separate for sexes	1	1	1
Offences under the Factory and Workshop Acts :—				
Illegal occupation of underground bakehouses (S. 101).	—	—		
Other offences	—	—		
Total	29	28	1	

S. RICHMOND, M.O.H.

